

Co-Chairs Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Ronna Stuller; I live in New London and am a board member of Medicare for All CT.

I urge you to support SB 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS, to expand and improve upon last year's legislation that will provide HUSKY access to young children and pregnant women starting January 2023.

As a retired preschool teacher and Head Start home visitor, I have had the opportunity to work with many immigrant students. Whether documented or undocumented, their families work and pay taxes, and children are required to have up-to-date immunizations, physical examinations, and routine health tests in order to attend school. These services may be provided by community health centers and school-based clinics, but health care could be provided more comprehensively and efficiently by allowing ALL income-eligible families to enroll their children in HUSKY.

One lesson learned during the COVID pandemic we've endured for the past two years is that the health of all of us individuals is inextricably linked to the health of our neighbors, coworkers, and service providers in our community. We don't need any further study to understand that turning 9 does not suddenly reduce the need for children - including those who are undocumented - to have access to care. As the mask mandate begins to lift in Connecticut schools, our responsibility remains to ensure that students continue to be protected, to the extent that is possible, from avoidable exposure to illness. Expanding HUSKY to age 18 will help us do just that.

In the long run, Connecticut needs a nonprofit health care system that covers all our residents, but, in the meantime, the current initiative to expand access to HUSKY and uncouple it from immigration status is an important step in providing care to a deserving and vulnerable population.

I support SB 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation.

Thank you,  
Ronna Stuller  
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